

Case 3266

***Palaeortyx phasianoides* Milne-Edwards, 1869 (Aves, Galliformes):
proposed conservation of usage of the specific name by the designation
of a neotype**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Article 75.6 of the Code, is to conserve the current usage of the name *Palaeortyx phasianoides* Milne-Edwards, 1869 for a species of fossil quail from the Miocene (family PHASIANIDAE) by the designation of a neotype. This is necessary because the specimen designated as lectotype in 2000 is not the species currently named *P. phasianoides*. It is proposed that this lectotype designation be set aside and a neotype designated in accord with accustomed understanding and usage of the name *P. phasianoides*.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Aves; Galliformes; PHASIANIDAE; quails; *Palaeortyx phasianoides*; Miocene; Europe.

1. In 1869 (p. 230), Milne-Edwards described the new phasianid genus *Palaeortyx* with three new species from the Lower Miocene site of Saint-Gérard-le-Puy, France. He designated (p. 230) one of the new species, *Palaeortyx gallica* (p. 230), as the type species. Another species, *P. phasianoides* (p. 237), was based on a fossil scapula and a fragmentary humerus (a humerus shaft with the proximal and distal ends broken off). Both syntypes are housed in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) in Paris. Milne-Edwards (1869, pp. 237–239) first described the scapula (specimen no. MNHN Av 2895) and then attributed the humerus shaft (MNHN Av 2896) to this species ('L'humérus je pense appartenir à cette espèce . . .'), followed by its description. Both syntypes were figured (inverted) by Milne-Edwards (1869, pl. 130, figs. 22–27).

2. During the course of further excavations in the 19th and 20th centuries, more material of *Palaeortyx phasianoides* was found at the type locality Saint-Gérard-le-Puy. This topotypic material is housed in the collections of the Université Claude Bernard, Lyon 1, of the Muséum Lyon, of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, and of the Bayerische Staatssammlung für Paläontologie und Geologie, Munich. We are currently investigating this material. In addition,

Palaeortyx phasianoides has been described from a number of other Miocene localities in Europe: La Grive (France, Middle Miocene; Ballmann, 1969a); Wintershof-West (Germany, Lower Miocene; Ballmann 1969b); Dolnice (Czech Republic, Lower Miocene; Švec, 1980). *Palaeortyx phasianoides* is thus a very well known and often mentioned species.

3. Ballmann (1969b) published a description of the fossil birds, including *Palaeortyx phasianoides*, from Wintershof-West, Germany. Ballmann was the first to recognise that the fragmentary syntype humerus (MNHN Av 2896) from Saint-Gérand-le-Puy was much too large for attribution to *P. phasianoides* and noted (p. 31): 'Der von ihm [Milne-Edwards] auf Tafel 130, figs. 26–27 abgebildete und auf S. 239 beschriebene Humerus, den er zu *Palaeortyx phasianoides* rechnet, kann infolge seiner wesentlich größeren Ausmaße nicht zu dieser Art gehören'. Ballmann recorded that, although badly preserved, the humerus belonged to a galliform. At the same time he referred five other humeri (MNHN Av 2912–2916) found at Saint-Gérand-le-Puy, and clearly differing from the syntype humerus (MNHN Av 2896), to *P. phasianoides*. Consequently, the syntype-scapula should have been fixed as lectotype, but unfortunately Ballmann (1969b) failed to do so explicitly.

4. Recently, Mlíkovský (2000, p. 93) studied the syntypes of *Palaeortyx phasianoides* and a small part of the topotypic material from the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. Mlíkovský ignored Ballmann's (1969b) identification, although he cited the publication. He fixed the fragmentary syntype humerus as the lectotype of *P. phasianoides*, arguing the humerus to be the more diagnostic element. We agree that generally an avian humerus is more diagnostic than a scapula, but not if the proximal and distal ends are lacking as in the syntype humerus. However, in the following paragraph of the same publication, Mlíkovský determined his lectotype humerus to be a pathological humerus of the anatid *Anas blanchardi* Milne-Edwards, 1863 (currently *Mionetta blanchardi*; Anseriformes, family ANSERIDAE). He noted that, as a consequence, the galliform species name *Palaeortyx phasianoides* was a junior subjective synonym of the anseriform species name *Mionetta blanchardi*. The anatid taxon *M. blanchardi* is one of the most common avian species (some thousands of specimens) in the Saint-Gérand-le-Puy deposits (detailed descriptions were given by Cheneval, 1983, 1987 and a tarsometatarsus lectotype was designated by Cheneval, 1983). Its osteology characterizes *M. blanchardi* as a true anatid that is clearly distinguishable from *P. phasianoides*. Until Mlíkovský's (2000) action, the name *P. phasianoides* had been universally accepted and much used in the taxonomic sense of a galliform (see, for example, Milne-Edwards, 1869, pp. 237–239; Lydekker, 1891, p. 139; Gaillard, 1908, pp. 97, 109; Lambrecht, 1933, p. 452; Brodkorb, 1967, p. 112; Ballmann, 1969a, pp. 178–180; Ballmann, 1969b, pp. 31–33; Švec, 1980, pp. 383–384; Bocheński, 1997, p. 308; Mourer-Chauviré, 2000, p. 481; Cheneval, 2000, p. 344).

5. Additionally, in a reverse of Ballmann's (1969b) argument, Mlíkovský (2000, p. 93) recorded that the syntype scapula of *Palaeortyx phasianoides* could not be considered a phasianid and that it was too small to belong to the same species as the lectotype humerus. He noted that the taxonomic identity of the scapula remained unresolved.

6. In our view, Mlíkovský's (2000) actions were based on incorrect identifications. He recognized correctly that the humerus (MNHN Av 2896) that he fixed as the lectotype of *Palaeortyx phasianoides* corresponds well with a further, complete

humerus from Saint-Gérard-le-Puy in the Hoffstetter collection in Paris (newly numbered MNHN SG 13734), which was labelled (in handwriting) as '*Anas consobrina* (taille *M. blanchardi*)'. Mlíkovský accepted the humerus MNHN SG 13734 as '*Mionetta blanchardi*' but, because of its morphological differences in comparison with the general morphology of the humeri of this species, he mistakenly concluded that it was a pathological specimen. In 2002 the authors restudied the humerus and recognized it as typical of the primitive galliform species *Ameripodius alexis* Mourer-Chauviré, 2000 (family QUERCYMEGAPODIIDAE), described from Saint-Gérard-le-Puy and based on several bones of the appendicular skeleton housed in the Collection of the Université Claude Bernard, Lyon 1, and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. The lectotype humerus of *P. phasianoides* (MNHN Av 2896) is also this species. Moreover, Mlíkovský's statement that the syntype scapula (his paralectotype, MNHN Av 2895) is not a phasianid is incorrect. Our study of the syntype scapula and the entire material of *P. phasianoides* from Saint-Gérard-le-Puy shows that it is typical of a phasianid and therefore would have been the correct choice for the lectotype.

7. So far, no other authors have commented on the suitability of Mlíkovský's (2000) designation. Mlíkovský did not respect Ballmann's (1969b) exclusion of the humerus from the syntypes. Instead he designated it as the lectotype and at the same time determined it erroneously as a pathological anatid. We therefore propose that the lectotype be set aside and that a neotype be designated in accord with the accustomed usage of the name *phasianoides*. This action would avoid considerable disruption and confusion affecting the involved species *Palaortyx phasianoides*, *Mionetta blanchardi* and *Ameripodius alexis*. The proposed neotype is the first-described syntype of *P. phasianoides*, the scapula (MNHN Av 2895) from Saint-Gérard-le-Puy, France, housed in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.

8. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to set aside all previous type fixations for the nominal species *Palaortyx phasianoides* Milne-Edwards, 1869 and to designate the scapula from Saint-Gérard-le-Puy, France (specimen no. MNHN Av 2895 in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris) as the neotype;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *phasianoides* Milne-Edwards, 1869, as published in the binomen *Palaortyx phasianoides* and as defined by the neotype designated in (1) above.

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).